3346

The Authority of Princes, *and Obedience of* Subjects:

CONSIDER'D in

A

SERMON

PREACH'D at

Weybridge in *SURRY*,

On OCCASION of

Their MAJESTIES Happy

George 2nd

CORONATION.

By *H. SMITH*, A. M. Rector of WEYBRIDGE, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable *HENRY* Earl of *LINCOLN*.

LONDON:

Printed for J. STAGGS in *Westminster-Hall*; And Sold by J. ROBERTS near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*. 1727. [Price 6*d*.]

The Authority of Princes, and Obedience of Subjects:

CONSIDER'D in

A

SERMON

PREACH'D at

Weybridge in SURRY,

On OCCASION of

Their MAJESTIES Happy

CORONATION.

By H. SMITH, A. M. Rector of WEYBRIDGE, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable HENRY Earl of LINCOLN.

LONDON:

Printed for J. STAGGS in Westminster-Hall; And Sold by J. ROBERTS near the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane. 1727. [Price 6 d.]

PROV. viii. 15.

By me Kings reign. ----

AS God, by his Almighty Power and Wiſdom, did at firſt Create the World; ſo did he reſolve to Suſtain and Uphold it, in order to make his Name more glorious in the Government of it. The continued Motions of the Sun, Moon, and other Heavenly Bodies; the kind and refreſhing Return of Summer and Winter in their proper Seaſons, and the Safety of the Univerſe, notwithſtanding the conſtant Oppoſition of contrary Elements, muſt convince us, that the World is no more Governed, than it was Made, by Chance.

Nor doth God in general only extend his Care and Providence over it; but in a more particular Manner diſplays it, for the Good and Benefit of Mankind, as they are linked together into Societies, and by prudent Laws, formed themſelves into various Governments. Theſe He, in a peculiar Manner, watcheth over and preſerves; for theſe He always ſhews a more eſpecial Regard; and notwithſtanding the Pride and Ambition, Envy and Revenge of ſome; notwithſtanding the natural Propenſity Men have for Change and Novelty, to ſhake off the Yoak of Government and Law, and to enjoy an unbounded Liberty; notwithſtanding that ſo many by Intereſt, by Inclination, and by Humour, are always watchful to apprehend any Occaſion to diſturb the Peace and Happineſs of a Kingdom; we cannot, ſurely, but from hence conclude, that 'tis God that keeps us from theſe inward Cauſes of Diſſolution; that 'tis by his Providence alone Society is preſerv'd, and that, as my *Text* obſerves, *By him Kings Reign and Govern in the World.*

I hope

I hope it will not be thought either Unſeaſonable or Unneceſſary to entertain you at this Time with a Diſcourſe touching the *Chief Magiſtrate's* Authority, and every *Private Subject's* Duty. For as we have lately celebrated Their MAJESTIES *Coronation*, and to Morrow being the Day of the KING's Happy *Nativity*; I ſhould think my ſelf wanting to thoſe Obligations which Religion and Allegiance both lay upon me, if I ſhould confine my Thoughts, and be ſilent on this Occaſion. And therefore I have made choice of theſe Words of *Wiſdom* for my preſent Subject, *By me Kings reign*; and from which, without loſing Time in any needleſs Paraphraſe upon them, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you theſe Two Things.

I. What that *Power* and *Authority* is, which *Kings* derive from God; and for what End they are appointed by Him, to *Reign* and *Govern*.

II. What Returns of *Gratitude* and *Obedience* is due from *Subjects*, to

those *Princes* who uſe their *Power* and *Authority* according to God's Appointment. And,

I. *Firſt*, I am to ſhew you, What that *Power* and *Authority* is, which *Kings* derive from God; and for what End they are appointed by Him, to *Reign* and *Govern*.

As nothing is more certain, than that the Supreme Power is ſet up, not only by God's Permiſſion, but by his Appointment; ſo is it as plain, that it was intended by Him for the Benefit of Human Society, and for ſupporting Men in the quiet Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of their Own. God's Original Inſtitution of Government, was for the better Order and Peace of the World, and to make it more tolerably Habitable, by forming Men into Communities, which, without it, would fall into Confuſion; and Mankind would be reduced to the Condition of Brutes, deſti-

tute

tute and helpleſs, and conſtantly expoſed to Want and Danger.

For how can we imagine that there ſhould be any Order among us, without Rule; or any Rule, without Submiſſion? How would Juſtice be adminiſtred, if every Man's Will was to be the Meaſure of Right and Wrong, and it was accounted no Duty to be Obedient to Laws? How ſhould Property be preſerv'd, if all Incloſures were broken down, every Man's Right invaded, and the Diſtinctions between Superiors and Inferiors confounded? But thus it would be, if the Reins of Government were relax'd, and Things left to be order'd by the contrary Humours of degenerate Men. And therefore, to prevent the great Miſchiefs and Inconveniencies that would naturally follow this State of Things, God thought it proper to inſtitute Government; and that Men ſhould give up their Power into the *Chief Magiſtrate's* Hands, that by that Advantage He might preſerve Order among them, and be better able to Protect and Defend them.

So

So that whether we consider the *Authority* invested in *Princes*, as Derived from God, or voluntarily Given them by Men, we shall find it manifestly certain, that it was originally intended for the Benefit and Prosperity of those under their Charge; and consequently, that they ought to look upon Themselves, as placed on their *Thrones*, under the strongest Obligations of Gratitude to Both, to promote the Honour and Glory of the One, and secure the Peace and Happiness of the Other.

If *Governors* did not receive their Commission from any Consent or Suffrage of Men, or Human Law, (as has been the slavish Conceits of some Bigots in Religion,) but did Derive their Authority immediately from God, Reigned by his Appointment, and were his Deputies, Stewards, and Vicegerents representing Him in the World: Yet even upon this Principle, 'tis plain, they ought to be faithful Deputies, and Stewards, and Vicegerents, and to act as such; not aiming at their own Interests, distinct

or

or ſeparate from thoſe of their People, how great ſoever their *Prerogatives* were. This ſhould be the End of every Civil Government; and ſo clear is it in common Sence, that nothing is more abſurd or repugnant to Reaſon, than for Men to advance any other Doctrine, which in its own Nature, muſt carry Oppreſſion in it.

Men were not born Slaves by Nature, or ſent into the World to have their Lives and Properties at the Mercy and Diſpoſal of every *Tyrant*; but have a Right to Both, from the Laws of God, and thoſe of their Country. There is a Principle of Self-defence ſo ſtrongly ingrafted in us, and interwoven in our Blood, that we need no other Monitor to teach us to endeavour to fruſtrate all wicked Attempts that tend to its Deſtruction.

Thoſe indeed who have private Views and Intereſts to ſerve, may flatter *Princes* in their Ambition, and from an abſurd Strain of Loyalty, and miſtaken Notion of God's Authority, preach up

an

an Abſolute and Unlimited *Obedience* to their Commands, tho' never ſo deſtructive. Our own Hiſtories will furniſh us with many Inſtances of Cruelty and Oppreſſion that have been committed, when *Princes* have been led away with this erroneous Doctrine. In what Convulſions was this Nation, and how near expiring, when a late Unhappy and Miſguided *One*, under the Influence of this pernicious Principle, broke through all the Boundaries of Law and Religion, in order to enſlave us to the cruel Superſtition and Tyranny of *Rome*?

What a vaſt Expence of Blood and Treaſure did it then coſt us, to ſupport the Conſtitution of our Government, againſt the Overflowing of this Slaviſh Doctrine, which had almoſt Unmann'd the Nation, and prepar'd it for Chains and Servitude?

Power, in its own Nature, is apt to ſwell Mens Minds, and turn their Heads: It too often makes them Proud and Inſolent, and forget Themſelves and their juſt Reſpects to all below them. But

when

when the Power with which *Princes* are Inveſted, is preach'd up, as Derived from God alone, and that to Him, and Him only, who has ſealed their Commiſſion, they are accountable for the Exerciſe of it: When *Princes* are taught to believe, that whatever the Conſtitution of the Government be; whatever Laws provided for the Continuance and Preſervation of it: In ſhort, whatever Liberties the People claim a Right to, are either Conceſſions from the Crown, or Uſurpations upon it; and that if they attempt to Aſſert and Defend thoſe Liberties from the moſt manifeſt Violations and injurious Oppreſſions; in ſo doing, they apparantly oppoſe the Authority of God: I ſay, when Men, out of a baſe Compliance with the Humour of a Court, aſſert theſe Principles, and that Thoſe who renounce them, renounce the Doctrine of the Church of *England*; 'tis not to be wonder'd at, if *Princes* would endeavour to make their Power Deſpotick and Arbitrary; and from God's Authority, as theſe Men tell them, cancel all Laws,

and diſpoſe of their Subjects and their Rights as they pleaſe. But let this Doctrine be never-ſo-full of Courtſhip and Flattery to a *Prince*, yet if it were purſued, it would ſhake the Baſis and Foundation of the State, becauſe it would ſubject all Human Societies to be deſtroyed; the Preſervation of which, is univerſally agreed to be the original Inſtitution of every Government.

We acknowledge, indeed, that 'tis an Act of Duty and common Juſtice to be ſubject to Thoſe under whoſe Protection we live: Nay, that it is a prime Act of Religion too, as St. *Paul* has enjoyned, *To be obedient to them who have the Rule over us, and to think them worthy of double Honour.* But ſurely, theſe Rulers ſhould be, as the ſame *Apoſtle* ſays in another Place, *The Miniſters of God to us, for our Good.* They ſhould look upon their Subjects as part of their Family, and have the ſame Concern and Tenderneſs for them, as Parents have for their own Children.

And how happy are thoſe *People*, who have ſuch *Princes* to Govern them? Who anſwer the Ends for which Government was put into their Hands, by uſing the Power they have, for the Good and Benefit of Thoſe over whom they are Placed. This is to make it truly the *Ordinance of God*, who, in the Conſtant Diſpenſations of his Providence, intends not the Miſery, but Happineſs of his Creatures. And therefore, whatever thoſe Men may pretend, who have the Confidence to tell us, we have no Redreſs from Oppreſſion and Slavery; muſt do nothing for our own Preſervation, tho' in the greateſt Extremities, but ſit quiet, and ſuffer all our Legal Properties to be trampled under foot, becauſe every *Prince* has God's Authority, which, they ſay, is Irreſiſtable: Whatever ſuch Friends to Arbitrary and Lawleſs Power may ſuggeſt; as this is a Doctrine full of Miſchief to Mankind, and deſtructive to all Societies, 'tis much to be fear'd, whenever any Prince ſhall make Uſe of that Authority, to ſubvert the Government

of which he is the *Guardian*; as in This, he acts contrary to the Truſt repoſed in him; ſo 'twill not be thought, that Reſiſting ſuch Lawleſs Authority, is Reſiſting the Authority of God; but that Men who are under ſuch Force, have a Right from Self-preſervation, which is a Law of Nature, and conſequently of God, to ſhake off that Force, by all the prudent Meaſures they can take.

This is what juſtified all thoſe true Patriots, that with the Hazard of their Lives and Fortunes, promoted and encouraged the late Glorious *Revolution*, in order to deliver the Nation from Popery and Slavery, which, like a Torrent, was overflowing the Church and State, and put the Government upon ſo Solid a Foundation, as that it might never be in the Power of any *Prince* hereafter, to introduce either. And in all their Proceedings, they thought they did not Reſiſt the Authority of God; becauſe, in ſo doing, they were preſerving the Authority of the Laws of the Land, and the Profeſſion of God's true Religion, from thoſe notorious and

unjuſt

unjuſt Encroachments that were made upon both.

Oh! how ſhould we Prize and Value the Poſſeſſion of thoſe Glorious Privileges our *Anceſtors* then ſo Bravely aſſerted and tranſmitted down, confirm'd to us!

Felices nimium bona ſi ſua nôrint, Angligenæ.

O happy we *Britons*, who from Thence enjoy thoſe Liberties, which all other Nations but this, have loſt! Who can rejoyce under an Authority that's Fix'd and Regular, that's Settled and Bounded by the *Laws* of the Realm; and thoſe *Laws* acknowledg'd as the true Meaſure and Standard of that *Authority!* whoſe Government's ſo equal and well-poiſed; ſo admirably well-temper'd together, between the Feebleneſs of a *Common-wealth*, and the Slavery of a Deſpotick and Arbitrary *Power*, that it is neither ſo Weak in its Effects, as not to Relieve us; nor ſo Strong in its Commands, as to Oppreſs and Deſtroy Us! O happy Conſtitution this! both envied and admired by all the World; being a Monarchy with as much Power as the beſt

Prince

Prince can wiſh; and that Power ſo limited, as not to break in upon the Property of the Subject!

And what's an Addition to our Happineſs, is, that the Adminiſtration of this Power, is at preſent inveſted in a *Prince* who will always uſe it with this juſt Limitation. A *Prince*, under whoſe Government and Protection our *Liberties* and *Properties*, all our Religious and Civil Rights will be ſecured to us; and we ſhall, if we are not wanting to our ſelves, enjoy the Benefit and Advantages of them.

But in order effectually to ſecure this Bleſſing, there is ſomething required of Us, which I muſt in Duty recommend, and that is, To exhort every one to have a ſtrict Regard to that Power and Authority with which *Princes* are inveſted; and not [illegible] Reſentment and Faction, Party-Rage and Malice, be the Cauſes of Diſaffection, and obſtruct the happy Effects of His MAJESTY'S gracious Intentions to us: But conſtantly bear in Mind what Returns of *Duty* and *Obedience* is due from Subjects to ſuch *Princes*, who

uſe

uſe their Power and Authority according to God's Appointment. This was the next Thing I propos'd to ſpeak to, which may ſerve as a proper *Application* to this Diſcourſe.

II. Conſidering the Conſtitution of our own Nature, and the unſteady Condition of Human Affairs, 'tis impoſſible that the great Concerns of any Government ſhould be ſo exactly managed, as to give Content and Satisfaction to All its Subjects. *Faction* is a rank Weed that will thrive in any Soil; 'tis wild in its Nature, and the Growth and Produce of every Country: nor can the utmoſt Care and Circumſpection, wholly deſtroy and root it out.

In all *Nations* we ſhall find Men of Reſtleſs and Diſcontented Spirits; who, through Pride and Ambition, Perfidiouſneſs and Treachery, Private Quarrels, or Private Intereſts, will diſturb the Peace and Happineſs of a Kingdom. Quiet Times are the greateſt Calamity to ſuch Men; their Buſineſs lies in Troubled Waters,

ters, which makes them with an envious and malignant Eye, be prying into every little Defect and Blemish of the Government, and industriously magnify them, to the great Prejudice and Disadvantage of those who Govern. 'Tis the whole Business of these Angry and Discontented Men, to raise Jealousies, and sow Divisions; and be daily inventing Lyes and Stories, calculated to alarm and inflame the Multitude. But let not those who wish well to the *Constitution*, be led away by the groundless Clamours of such Designing Men, who when they cry out the loudest *Danger*, know there's none, but to themselves, and their *Party*.

Men of honest and peaceable Dispositions, who have no Private Views or Interests to serve, but wish well to their Country and Religion, should not suffer this Cheat to be put upon them, and become an easy Prey to those, who Wish the *Dangers* they pretend to fear, and are pursuing such Measures that must ruin those, they can Deceive.

As

As all Lyes and Forgeries invented againſt the Government, carry the Seeds of Treaſon in them, and by being couch'd in ambiguous Terms, are ſafe from the Puniſhment of the Laws; ſo Men of Probity and Character ſhould be upon their Guard, and not ſuffer their Minds to be poiſon'd with them. The Infection would be ſtopt, if they would ſit down and recollect the Falſity of moſt of thoſe Reports, that with great Confidence have been averr'd for Truth; and when any New One is propagated, to conſider with themſelvs what more Reaſon there is for believing That, than the many Others they have heard with as much Appearance of Truth, but which a few Days has convinc'd them, were abſolutely Falſe. They ſhould attentively look into the true and real Cauſes of all the Clamour and dreadful Apprehenſions that are raiſed by theſe pretended Patriots, and they would ſoon find, that moſt proceeded from Reſentment, Faction, Ill-rature, or Revenge; and that becauſe they had not a Share in the *Legiſlative Power*, that therefore they were out of Humour

with it. But this is ſo Self-evident to all who will reflect calmly with themſelves, and not be under the Deluſion, that I ſhall ſpend no more Time in expoſing the monſtrous Baſeneſs and Injuſtice of it; but for a Concluſion, exhort all ſuch who Wiſh well to Their Preſent MAJESTIES, and Their Glorious FAMILY, to pay a willing and dutiful Submiſſion to Them.

Tho' God, in the ſevere Diſpenſations of his Providence, has lately taken from us a *King*, in whom Wiſdom and Underſtanding, Juſtice, Clemency and great Goodneſs, a tender Regard for the Rights of his *Subjects*, and an unſhaken Zeal for the *Proteſtant Religion*, did all conſpire to make his Reign a Bleſſing to us; yet in this *his Judgment*, has He *remember'd Mercy*, by preſerving to us a Branch of the ſame *Royal* Stock, to repair that great and unexpected Loſs, and bleſs'd us with a *Prince*, who, with the Crown, inherits the Royal Virtues of His Father; a *Prince*, who, by purſuing the ſame wiſe and ſteady Meaſures he took, has manifeſtly ſhewn, at his firſt ſetting out, in how high a Degree he poſſeſſes

poſſeſſes all the great Qualities requiſite to make His Government Eaſy to himſelf, and Pleaſing to His Subjects.

Inſtead of the weak part ſome other *Princes* have ſhewn, of courting their Enemies, and neglecting their Friends, He has began his Reign, with continuing Thoſe in Power, His Royal FATHER had entruſted; Men of ſtanch Honour and Honeſty, who nobly withſtood the Temptations of Power and Profit, rather than give in to thoſe Meaſures that were then purſuing againſt the Publick Good: Men who had always been true to Him and His Family: Men who had eminently diſtinguiſh'd themſelves, had taken much Pains, and been at great Expence for the Support of the *Proteſtant Succeſſion* in His Illuſtrious Houſe: In ſhort, ſuch Men that had ſuffer'd much in their Zeal for it, from an Implacable and Reſtleſs Party, who were Betraying it, and their Country's Intereſt.

If we may make Preſages from this and many other happy Occurrences at the Beginning of his Reign, there is juſt Reaſon for us to expect the Remainder of

it will be Glorious; and that he will make us a Great and Powerful People, by purſuing ſuch Meaſures as manifeſtly tend to our Peace and Happineſs. So that if we have any Regard to Ourſelves, and our own Intereſts, we are not only Paſſively to ſubmit to HIM and HIS ROYAL CONSORT, and pay them a cold and forced Obedience; but Actively promote their Glory and Honour, by a hearty and ſincere, a willing and chearful *Obedience* to them.

It is a great Happineſs to a Nation to have *Princes* fill the Throne, who are endowed with ſuch Qualities, as in their own Nature, muſt command Obedience and Eſteem from all ingenuous and unprejudiced Minds. This Happineſs we at this Day enjoy, who live under the Government of a KING and QUEEN, who in all their Actions have diſcover'd thoſe Royal Vertues, which even add a new Luſtre and Authority to Government.

How glorioufly did the One, at his firſt ſetting out in the Race of Honour, diſcover an inbred Greatneſs and Nobleneſs in his Blood, when at the Head of the

Britiſh

Britiſh Troops, He behaved himſelf with ſuch Gallantry, that gained him the Eſteem of all the *Confederates*? As His ROYAL FATHER had eminently ſignaliz'd himſelf in *Greece* and *Germany* againſt the Enemies of *Chriſtianity*; ſo did He diſtinguiſh himſelf, in *Flanders*, againſt the Abettors of *Popery*, and exorbitant *Power*; and at the great and memorable Victory of *Oudenard*, give convincing Proofs, (whenever the Enemies of our Peace and Religion oblige us to it) that we have another *Prince* on the Throne, as well qualified to Lead an Army, as to Govern a Kingdom.

And as to His ROYAL CONSORT, how ſhould our Hearts overflow with Love and Duty to a *Princeſs*, who ſo early diſcover'd her Zeal for the *Proteſtant Cauſe*, by rejecting the Offer of a *Crown* and *Empire*, rather than conform to the groſs *Idolatry* of the Church of *Rome!* How can we ſufficiently admire this rare Example of Self-denial in our QUEEN! How Great was the Temptation to Allure! how Noble the Reſolution to Refuſe! From this Inſtance of her Firmneſs to the *Proteſtant Religion*, expreſs'd in a Private

Con-

Condition, what great Things may we not expect from Her, in that Exalted and Publick Station God now has Placed Her?

'Tis impoſſible, without incurring the Suſpicion of Flattery, or being thought to aim at ſome Private Intereſt, to do Juſtice to Her MAJESTY, in this, as well as many other Inſtances of Her *Princely Virtues.* That noble Spirit in all Her Behaviour; that familiar Freedom in Her Words and Actions; that Care and Concern for Her Glorious OFF-SPRING; and that generous and ſincere Affection for the Publick Good: As theſe are Graces, which, without the help of farther Panegyrick, deſerve Admiration; ſo ought they to command the moſt grateful Returns of Love and Eſteem, of Duty and Gratitude, from us.

And may the many Excellencies ſo eminently diſplayed in Both Their MAJESTIES, make us not only joyn heartily in united Thanks to God, for fixing them peaceably on the Throne; but in fervent Prayers to Him, for the Preſervation of Their Perſons, and the Eſtabliſhment of Their Government. And ſince our Happineſs evi-

dently

dently depends upon the Continuance of our *Conſtitution* in Church and State, let us finally adhere to the preſent Settlement in this Illuſtrious FAIMLY, which alone can ſecure us from the Cruelties and Oppreſſions of a *Popiſh* King, and a Tyrannical Government. In a Word, let us act with Fidelity and Zeal, with Love and Loyalty ſuitable to the great Bleſſings we enjoy; and by chearfully Obeying His MAJESTY, and readily complying with all reaſonable Intimations of His Will, render His Reign Eaſy to Himſelf, and the Cares of HIM and HIS ROYAL CONSORT ſucceſsful, for the Good and Welfare of Their People.

Which pray God give us all Hearts to do, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

FINIS.

and Obedience of Subjects. 23

dently depends upon the Continuance of our Confirmation in Church and State, let us finally adhere to the prefent Settlement in this Illuftrious FAMILY, which alone can fecure us from the Cruelties and Oppreffions of a Popifh King, and a Tyrannical Government. In a Word, let us act with Fidelity and Zeal, with Love and Loyalty fuitable to the great Bleffings we enjoy; and by chearfully Obeying His MAJESTY, and readily complying with all reafonable Intimations of His Will, render His Reign Eafy to Himfelf, and the Cares of Him and His ROYAL CONSORT fuccefsful for the Good and Welfare of their People.

7 DE65

Which pray God give us all Hearts to do, through Jefus Chrift our Lord. Amen.

FINIS.